



NATIONAL HISPANIC COUNCIL ON AGING

Yanira Cruz – President & CEO

February 13, 2006

Kevin J. Martin
Michael Copps
Jonathan Adelstein
Deborah Tate
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: NPRM for Broadband Video Franchise Reform and Competition

Dear Commissioners:

The National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA) is writing to commend the proposals in the Video Choice Act and to ask that our endorsement be noted in the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Broadband Video Franchise Reform and Competition. The proposed legislation will accomplish two primary goals: One, it will give consumers a choice of video service providers; and two, it will create a competitive video services industry that will result in lower prices for consumers.

We support both legislative action and regulatory rules on this subject because as Chairman Martin said, "it is the Commission's responsibility to remove unreasonable roadblocks to competition." We believe the FCC should adopt rules under Section 621(a) of the Communications Act to ensure that the local franchising process encourages video competition and broadband deployment for the benefit of consumers and that it is not a barrier to entry for new competitors seeking to offer video and broadband services.

By streamlining federal regulation of the cable TV industry and eliminating local franchise requirements for new entrants, the proposed federal legislation will stimulate competition among telephone companies, power companies and the incumbent cable companies. Not only will consumers get faster access to new technologies, such as High Definition video, video-on-demand and interactive programming, they'll be able to enjoy them at lower prices. Cable rates have climbed at almost three times the rate of inflation since 1996. For low-income consumers, such as the Hispanic elderly, cable television is one of their biggest monthly expenses. Consumers have paid too much for too long for poor service and limited programming, particularly limited in-language programming.

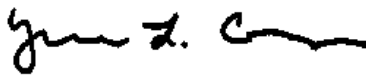
The proposed legislation includes important safeguards against harmful discriminatory actions, such as redlining, and preserves the FCC's role in enforcing rules about consumer privacy and

protection among new providers and cable incumbents. At the same time, it will protect the interests of local governments, ensuring they receive franchise revenues from new entrants and maintain authority over public rights-of-way.

Consumers are rightfully demanding relief from burdensome escalating cable rates. The Video Choice Act will ensure the consumer choice and competition necessary to bring about the benefits of lower prices and better service.

The time for video franchise reform is now. Thank you for this opportunity to represent the NHCOA's position on this matter of prime importance to the Hispanic elderly and consumers at large.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yanira Cruz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yanira Cruz, MPH, DrPH (abd)
President & CEO
National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)